



May 14, 2020

The Honorable John Eklund
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
Ohio Senate
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Senate Bill 308 – Civil Liability of Service Providers in Emergency

Dear Chairman Eklund:

As President of the Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio (AMCNO), an organization representing more than 5,000 physician, resident and medical student members in Northern Ohio, I am writing on behalf of the organization and our members to voice our support for Senate Bill 308 – a bill that would address liability of healthcare providers and businesses during an emergency.

As the coronavirus outbreak continues in Ohio, our frontline healthcare professionals are straining under an increasingly difficult burden, and the issue of pandemic-related lawsuits is of great concern to physicians and hospitals alike. The expanded civil immunity for medical professionals outlined in this bill would help to alleviate this concern by covering actions taken during an emergency, including decisions to withhold or withdraw healthcare services in compliance with an executive or director's order. The bill would also extend this immunity to professional discipline and other civil actions, and limits liability to actions, omissions, decisions, or compliance that constitutes willful or wanton misconduct.

Healthcare professionals and facilities will always make every effort to provide the best care possible to their patients. During an emergency situation such as the COVID-19 pandemic, it only makes sense to protect clinicians by limiting the threat of liability so that they can make critical decisions based on not what choice will be least likely to result in a lawsuit, but on which choice does the broadest possible good for the communities in which they serve.

This bill is of utmost importance to our members and to the entire medical community, and we ask that Ohio's healthcare providers be protected. Thank you for considering our comments on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Collins, MD
AMCNO President

Cc: Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee